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# Food Safety Educator

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## Fight BAC!™

With a multi-faceted media program and a major Washington kick-off, a new food safety consumer education campaign was launched this fall by the Partnership for Food Safety Education.

The eye-catching Fight BAC!™ cartoon character teams up with four critical food safety education messages presented graphically to teach consumers about safe food handling.

According to Susan Conley of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, "what makes this campaign unique is that it really is a public/private partnership. Industry, consumer groups, government agencies, health organizations—all of us are working together to make this campaign a reality."

In addition, Dagmar Farr of the Food Marketing Institute noted that "this campaign takes the basic food safety messages and presents them in a whole new way. With this campaign, we have the tools to start changing people's food handling behavior."

A highlight of the campaign is a 30-second animated public service announcement (PSA) that features the Fight BAC!™ character. The PSA will be distributed to television stations nationwide.

**"All of the print campaign materials will be designed** so that our non-profit cooperators can just copy them and go," according to Sara Lilygren of the American Meat Institute. Key materials include:

- A Fight BAC!™ brochure with food safety basics for consumers.
- A community action kit: designed for food safety educators, the kit is camera ready. Included are a press release, campaign ideas, logos and brochure. (**Note: The community action kit will be mailed to all Food Safety Educator subscribers.**)

- A supermarket kit: with bag stuffers, shelf labels and camera-ready art, this kit will let supermarkets join the food safety campaign trail.

According to Lilygren, the campaign focuses on four critical messages:

- Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook: Cook to proper temperatures.
- Chill: Refrigerate promptly.

The safe food handling messages are graphically depicted, Lilygren explained, to help consumers visualize the actions that need to be taken. The constant use and repetition of these graphics, along with the Fight BAC!™ character, will allow all campaign cooperators to reinforce these key concepts and raise consumer awareness.

To monitor the effectiveness of the campaign, the national polling company Yankelovich conducted a national food safety survey in September. That survey will be followed up later to assess the campaign's impact.

Industry groups are providing more than \$500,000 in funding while other cooperators are providing printing and other services, as

well as distribution support. "We're always looking for new partners," Farr said, "and encourage groups to contact us."

Non-profit health, education and civic groups can use the materials free of charge. Organizations interested in using the Fight BAC!™ cartoon character in promotion or sales of products will be required to pay a fee. For more information, call Lisa Gullede of Hill and Knowlton at 202/944-5193.

For up-to-date information about the campaign, check the web site: [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org). ●



# USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline Heads for the Holidays

As the Hotline staff heads for the holidays, their busiest time of the year, they've pulled together some fascinating and useful facts for their holiday package of feature stories—available on the Internet ([www.usda.gov/fsis](http://www.usda.gov/fsis)) and through FastFax (1-800-238-8281). Here are some highlights:

## Do you know?

### *Where does the name “turkey” come from?*

Now, a lot of people may think they know what—or who—a turkey is. But to really be in the know, take a look at this. The name turkey was originally applied to an African bird (now known as the guinea fowl) which was believed to have come from Turkey. When the Europeans stumbled on the American turkey, they thought it was the same bird—so they named it “turkey.”

### *How much turkey do we eat a year?*

This will amaze you. In 1996, it was estimated that we each ate almost 15 pounds of turkey. Clearly, turkey is heading for our dinner plates more often than just the holidays.

### *Which is better—a “hen” turkey or a “tom”?*

This is an equal opportunity world. And the answer to this question is—they're equally good! Actually, the designation of “hen” (female) or “tom” (male) is optional on the label and is an indication of size. Toms are larger.

### *What's the nutrient content of turkey?*

There's a lot of good news here. Turkey provides a significant amount of protein as well as other nutrients. Fat, saturated

fat and cholesterol are also present, with most of the fat being in the skin. A three ounce serving of baked turkey breast with skin has 160 calories, 6 grams of fat, 65 milligrams of cholesterol and 24 grams of protein. Without skin: 120 calories, 1 gram of fat, 55 milligrams of cholesterol and 26 grams of protein.

## Safe Handling Tips:

### *How long can you keep turkey in the fridge or freezer?*

Fresh whole turkey and fresh turkey parts should be cooked (or frozen) within one to two days of purchase. A whole turkey (uncooked) can be frozen for up to 12 months before quality gradually declines.

### *When is it “done?”*

For tenderness and doneness, the internal temperature, as registered on a meat thermometer, must reach a minimum of

180 degrees F in the innermost part of the thigh before removing the turkey from the oven. For optimum safety and uniform doneness, we recommend cooking stuffing outside the bird. If you do stuff it, the center of the stuffing must reach 165 degrees F before you remove it from the bird.

### *How about safe grilling and smoking?*

More and more people are heading outdoors to cook the turkey, so it is important to know how to do it safely.

- **When you grill**, remember that cooking times vary, depending on many factors, including the size of the turkey and the distance from the coals. We recommend that you don't stuff the turkey. It will cook more evenly and

safely without it. Replenish the grill with approximately 15 briquettes every hour. The turkey is done when a meat thermometer in the inner thigh reaches 180 degrees F.

- **When you smoke**, you are using both heat and moisture to cook your food. So, be sure to add liquid to the drip pan. Be aware that some smokers have a built-in temperature indicator. If yours doesn't, place an appliance thermometer on the food rack to monitor the air temperature.

When the thermometer reaches 225 to 300 degrees F, place the turkey on the rack and quickly replace the cover. As with grilling, we recommend that you don't stuff the turkey. Because you're cooking at a low temperature, it can take too long for heat to reach the stuffing.

Smoking takes longer than grilling, so follow the manufacturer's estimated cooking times. Add fresh charcoal every hour to maintain temperature of 225 to 300 degrees F and ensure smoke. Also add liquid to the water pan as needed. As with grilling, the turkey is done when a meat thermometer inserted into the inner thigh reaches 180 degrees F.

### *How long can you keep cooked turkey?*

Cooked turkey and cooked turkey dishes can be kept in the refrigerator for three to four days. After that, freeze them or pitch them. Cooked turkey will maintain quality in the freezer for four months, turkey dishes for four to six months. ●

USDA's **MEAT** and **POULTRY**  
**HOTLINE**  
**1-800-535-4555**

The Hotline, part of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, provides accurate, up-to-date information to callers on safe food handling and the prevention of foodborne illness. Home economists, registered dietitians and food technologists staff this public health service.



## National Food Safety Educator's Network (EdNet)

EdNet is a new electronic network allowing food safety educators around the country to connect on a daily basis.

While there have always been informal contacts between various groups and organizations, there has not been a system to connect the many interested parties, according to EdNet originators Susan Conley of USDA and Carole Schiffman of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Often, they note, it has been the "professional grapevine" that has connected educators. Now, EdNet will be the electronic grapevine. One reason the "grapevine" is so important, explained Schiffman, is that

there are so many groups and organizations around the country involved in food safety education.

Food safety educators can be found in federal, state and local food agencies; colleges and universities; health and consumer organizations, and professional and trade organizations.

The goal of EdNet is to provide a forum where all parties interested in food safety education can communicate and share information easily on an ongoing basis. To begin, EdNet will be a direct e-mail communication from the federal government to subscribers.

In addition to FSIS and FDA, federal

agencies involved in the effort include USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service as well as Agricultural Research Service. Also participating are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

EdNet will be up and running later this fall. To join EdNet, email your name, address and phone number to:

RDouglas@Bangate.FDA.gov. Or, call Robyn Brown Douglas at 202/205-2857. Please be sure to state whether your interest is primarily consumer/health professional education or retail/food service education. ●

## Operation RISK

Produced by Michigan State University Extension, this is a food safety education program for kids in grades 3 through 5, but with components that make it easily adaptable—even to adults.

Through the Operation RISK curriculum, kids assume the role of detectives as they work through the program with "fun-to-solve cases and missions to complete at home with an adult."

It's a multi-media program that has it all:

- **Video tape:** "What You Can't See Can Hurt You" introduces the relationship between bacteria and foodborne illness.
- **Audio tape:** "The Handwashing Rap" is a useful tool for getting the kids to wash their hands for 20 seconds.

The curriculum kit also comes with a teacher guide, learning activities and posters. The cost is \$60.

In addition, a computer game called "Risk Raiders" allows student detectives to practice food safety behaviors as they solve three food-related missions. The cost is \$30. For more information contact:

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## A Hot Health Web Site



Launched last April, *healthfinder*<sup>TM</sup> is a free "gateway" World Wide Web site serving as a point of entry to a broad range of consumer health information resources produced by the federal government and its many partners. While many web sites can be a frustrating maze of deadends and contortions, this one in fact is easy to use and actually delivers the goods.

*healthfinder*<sup>TM</sup> serves as a health "search engine." Enter the item you're looking for, and it will find it for you. It reduces information overload from commercial or poor quality sources and helps consumers locate the health information they need—or health professionals.

The healthfinder site at <http://www.healthfinder.gov> features a searchable index and locator aids for news, publications, online journals, support and self-help groups, online discussions and toll-free numbers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is developing this site in collaboration with other federal agencies that have health communication responsibilities. Individual agencies and organizations maintain their own sites—*healthfinder* just helps people get there.

As part of its partnership endeavor, healthfinder will be including links to information offerings of the public health and overall health community ranging from commercial online services to health maintenance organizations. **This also applies to local and state governments offering health information over the Internet**—and whose sites can be linked through *healthfinder*.

To join the project, or for more information, contact Dr. Mary Jo Deering at 202/260-2652 or David Baker at 202/401-0731. They are with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. ●

## In Case You've Missed It—Check Out the 1997 FDA Food Code

The code offers model requirements for states and jurisdictions with responsibility for retail food inspection.

The 1997 version is the third edition since FDA consolidated and significantly revised the code in 1993. To gain more uniform adoption, FDA has been working with the Conference for Food Protection as well as other organizations and industry groups to come up with consensus recommendations.

A new element to the 1997 code is a subpart addressing special requirements for highly susceptible populations. While many of these provisions existed in previous codes, this is the first time FDA has clearly delineated safeguards for people who face increased risks from foodborne illness including the elderly, immune compromised—especially those in nursing homes and hospitals— and preschool children in day care.

Four-color, spiral-bound copies of the 400 page 1997 FDA Food Code are available from the National Technical Information Center for \$35 each. Call 800/553-6847. The code is also available on disc for \$35 and on CD-rom for \$60. ●

USDA's Food Safety and Consumer Education Staff

# F•S•E

The Educator is produced by the Food Safety and Consumer Education Staff of FSIS. For more than 15 years, staff educators have been working cooperatively with researchers, scientists, and marketing and design experts to produce educational materials including print, video and teleconferencing services.

reader response

**FAX Back**  
**(202) 720-9063**

We're interested in your comments,  
questions, suggestions for new topics.  
Jot them down and fax them in,  
attention:  
Editor, FSE.

ARABIC *Chinese* ENGLISH  
French GERMAN *Italian*  
PORTUGUESE SPANISH

Believe it or not, you can get "the golden rules of safe food preparation" in all of these languages. The World Health Organization (WHO) developed the rules and publishes them as wallcharts—and they are available free.

The rules include advice about cooking thoroughly, safe food storage, re-heating of cooked foods, handwashing and cross-contamination. (Temperatures are in Celcius, so you'll need to modify.)

WHO also has advice for food handlers called "Hygiene in Food Service and Mass Catering Establishments." It's available as a leaflet or wallchart. It comes in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

For copies, write:

Food Safety Unit

WHO

1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

Fax: +41 22 791 0746

For Internet access, check out the WHO web site: <http://www.who.ch>. There's a lot of interesting information there. Other WHO publications, food safety reports and fact sheets as well as news releases are also posted. ●



## Child Care: Making Food Healthy & Safe

This FREE 80-plus-page publication, "Making Food Healthy and Safe," does a great job of providing clear and easy-to-use information for child care providers. Graphically presented, with lots of charts and tips, the publication manages to highlight key information while also covering topics in depth.

Topics include safe food handling and sanitation as well as nutritional guidelines for infants and young children. There's a menu planning checklist, snack ideas and tips for serving food, as well as teaching children about food.

This pub was produced by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is based on the "National Health and Safe Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs."

The new pub and the performance standards are available free from:

National Maternal and Child Health Clearinghouse  
2070 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 450  
Vienna, VA 22182-2536  
Fax: 703/821-2098 ●

## Coming in December: 12th National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control

The 1997 conference, to be held here in Washington, D.C., Dec. 3-5, will focus on approaches for reducing the health and economic burden of chronic disease.

It's co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Program Directors. For registration information, call 1-800-772-8232. ●

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